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ABSTRACT

Designed for use at the elementary level, this study guide accompanies a short history of the life and culture of the Massachusetts Bay Colony prior to the American Revolution (see related document, ED 108 997). The guide provides additional material as well as a series of study questions, suggestions for additional reading, and field trips within Massachusetts where students can gain firsthand knowledge about colonial times. Topics in the guide include the voyage from Europe to America, the Plymouth Plantation, housing, clothing, food, crafts and arts, religion, education, and government. (Author/DE)

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Study Guide

for use with "Before 1776"

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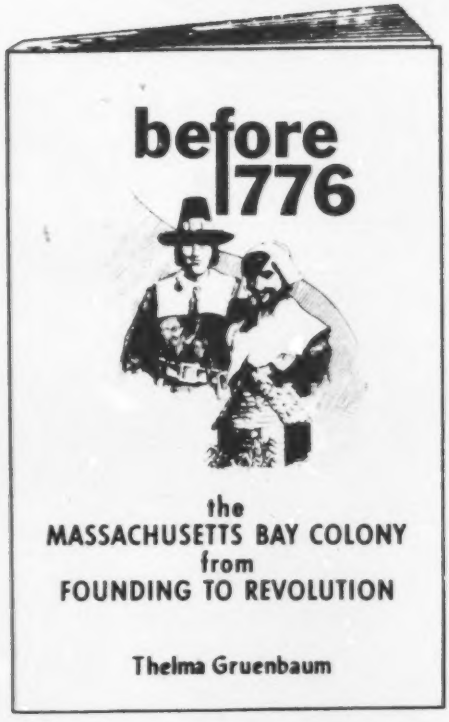

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The Voyage from Europe to America

By the year 1641, 80,000 people had crossed the Atlantic Ocean from Europe to America. A 17th century voyager has recorded:

"When the ships have weighed anchor for the last time, then both the sea voyage and the misery begin in earnest. For from there, the ships often take eight, nine, ten or twelve weeks sailing."..... Shipboard companions were heard to comment....."Oh, if only I were back at home, even lying in my pig sty.....Ah, dear God, if I only once had a piece of good bread or a good fresh drop of water."

from "The Colonial Experience" by D. Hawke

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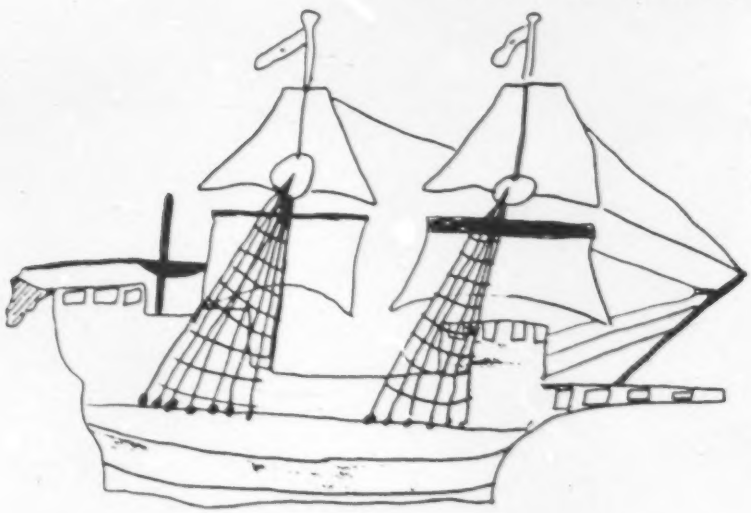


drawing of a model of the Mayflower, a 17th century sailing vessel.

The Mayflower held 180 "tuns" (or double hogsheads of wine) in its hold. The length of the ship was no more than 80 or 90 feet long. Since motors had not been invented, the ship was powered by sails hung from masts. Steering the boat was the job of a sailor who stayed down in the bottom of the boat (and could not see where he was going.) An officer watched through an open hatch (window) and called down orders. The man below steered with a whipstaff (a beam of wood attached to the tiller). Steering wheels had not been invented yet. A compass was used to find out which direction they were sailing, but precise and complicated equipment was not yet in use.

drawing of compass with fleur-de-lis at North and cross at East

On such a long voyage undertaken in such a small boat, the colonists encountered many problems. Find out what some of the difficulties were and how the colonists resolved them:

1) How was food prepared on shipboard and which foods were available? What problems were caused by lack of food or unavailability of clean drinking water?
2) What was scurvy and why did it appear on long voyages? How could it be cured?
3) Name some other diseases which appeared during the voyage?
4) What were some of the reasons that people came to America?
5) Name some of the occupations of the colonists who came.
6) How did people come who had no money to pay for their passage? Were there many who came this way?
7) The Massachusetts Bay Colony had a "charter" for making a settlement. Explain what this meant.

Books to Read

Morison, Samuel Eliot, The Story of the Old Colony of New Plymouth, Knopf, New York, 1956

Hawke, David, The Colonial Experience, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1966

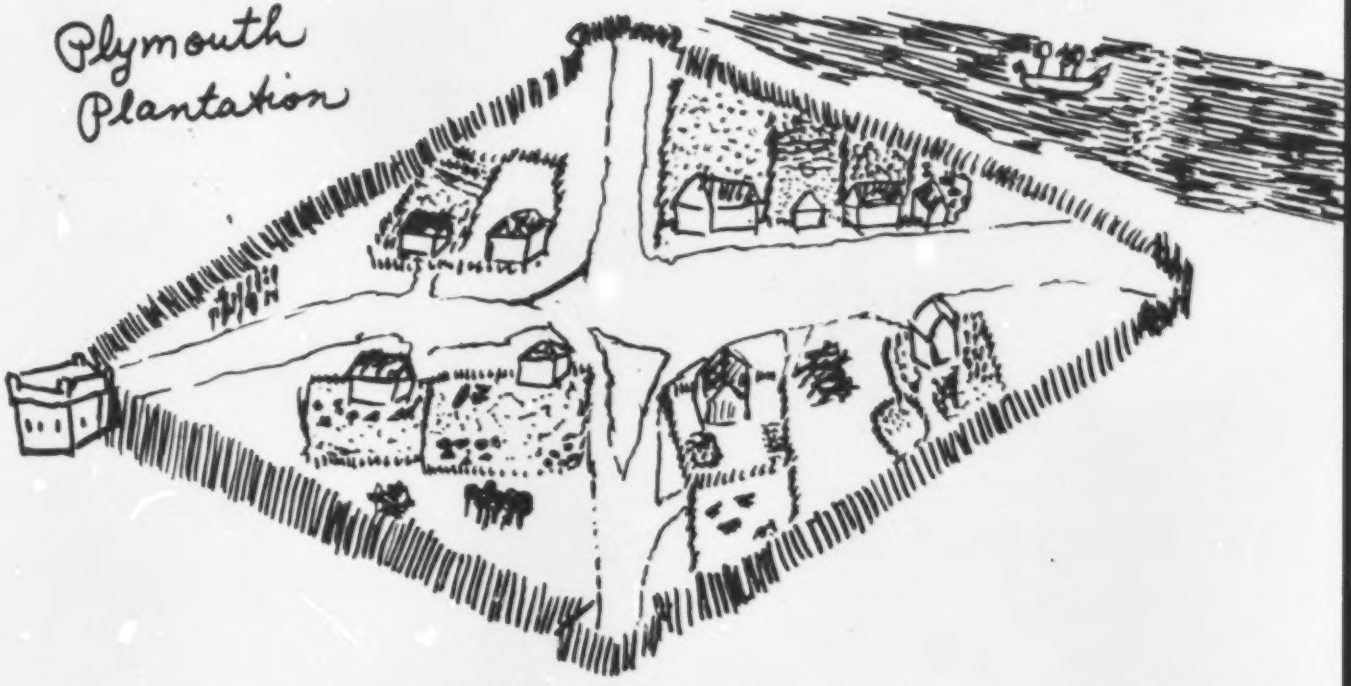
Miller, John C., The Colonial Image, George Braziller, N.Y. 1962

Upham, Stuart, The Illustrated Story of How Mayflower II was Built; Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth, 1960

May, W. E. A History of Marine Navigation, W. W. Norton, N.Y. 1973

A Place to Visit

The Mayflower II anchored at Plymouth, Massachusetts or see the scale model of Mayflower II at the Museum of Science, Boston.



1) What do you think was the purpose of having a stockade and fort?

2) Name some reasons for locating the village near the water?

Plymouth Plantation had a number of houses owned by men who came over on the Mayflower. The following list tells the occupation of each house owner when he first arrived at Plymouth:

Howland: steward-servant
Brewster: printer, publisher, and ruling elder
Warren and Hopkins (occupations not known)
Fuller; deacon and physician
Bradford: silk weaver, (later he was Governor)
Cooke: wool comber
Alden: cooper
Standish: military leader
Winslow: printer (and later, held office)

1) The list above tells the trades of many of the colonists who came over on the Mayflower. Looking at the map of Plymouth above, what would you say was the <u>principal</u> occupation of the colonists?

2) Do you see any specialized shops (such as a blacksmith's, etc.)? How do you think that people got the everyday articles they needed?

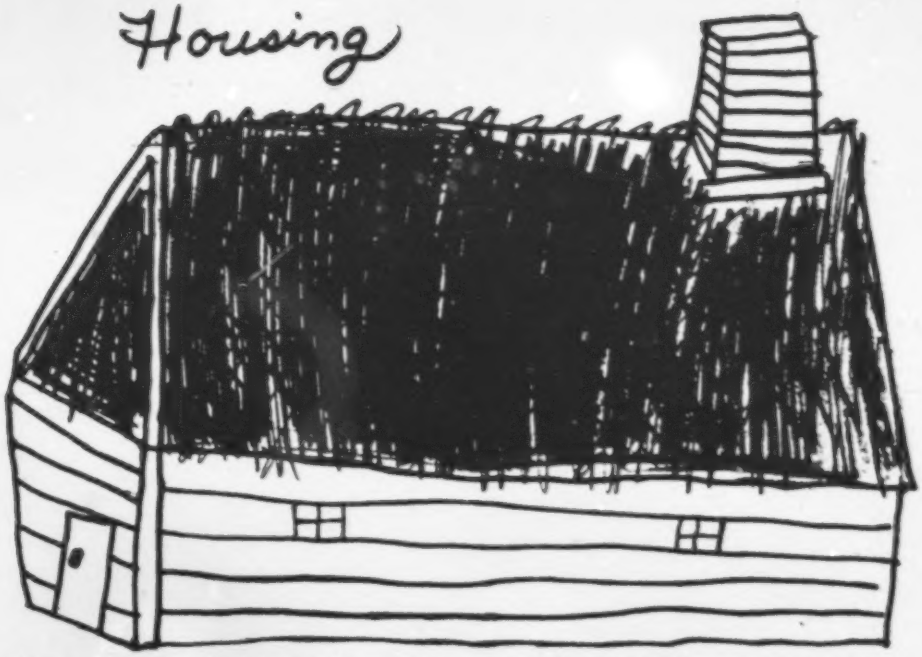
A Book to Read

Colby, Jean Poindexter, <u>Plimoth Plantation,</u> then and now, Hastings House, New York, 1970

Places to Visit

Plimouth Plantation, Plymouth, Massachusetts or
see the scale model of Plimoth Plantation at the Museum of Science

Housing



The sketch above shows a typical house of the 1620's. Note the roof and chimney and the shape of the house.

1) How many rooms did early houses have? When a room was added on, where was it located? Explain the meaning of the term "lean-to" or "leanter".

2) What materials were used to build houses? For the chimney, for the roof? Which materials were more fireproof?

3) Since iron for nails was not easily obtained, how were the houses built without the use of nails?

4) Describe the uses of the fireplace. When there was more than one room, where was the fireplace in relation to the rest of the rooms?

5) How large were the houses? Describe the windows. Was there any advantage to having low ceilings and small windows?

6) Why was there so little furniture? Where did they get their furniture?

Books to Read

Fitch, James Marston, American Building, the Historical Forces that Shaped it, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1966

Langdon, William Chauncy, Everyday Things in American Life, 1607-1776, Scribner's, New York, 1937

Dow, George, Everyday Life in the Mass. Bay Colony, Ben Blom, New York, 1967

Places to Visit

See the houses at Plimoth Plantation.
See the exhibit on thatching a roof and coopering a barrel at the Museum of Science, Boston.
For a view of earlier housing, visit Pioneer Village at Salem, Mass.
For later housing which was more luxurious, see Sturbridge Village.
See Paul Revere's house in Boston (Revolutionary era)
Look at the colonial room settings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Clothing

The sketches show costumes for men and women in the 17th and 18th century (or Plimoth and Sturbridge). Because clothing had been brought over on the boats from Europe, then handed down from parent to child, clothing styles tended to change very little over the years. As you can see from the sketches, there is some change in costumes in the two centuries. Try to find the answers to the following questions.

1) What do you think explains the change from simple clothing in the 17th century to more elaborate clothing in the 18th century?
2) Which is the servant? How do his clothes differ from the clothing worn by the others? His hat? His shoes?
3) What materials were used in making clothing?
4) For each of the following materials (wool, linen, leather) find out some of the steps involved for making a garment from the raw product.
5) Colonists are often shown in books wearing dark and drab colors. This is wrong. Plants and flowers were used to produce a wide array of warm and glowing colors. Find out how yellows, browns, reds, and blue colors were produced. Which color had to be made from a dye?

A Book to Read

Warwick, Edward, and Fitz, Henry C. Early American Costume, The Century Company, New York, 1939

Places to Visit

see people dressed in 17th and 18th century costumes at Plimoth and Sturbridge.

"Before 1776" Study Guide by T. Gruenbaum (1975)

Food

Make a list of foods which were available in colonial times by thinking about ways in which the colonists could obtain food.

1) What foods could be found growing wild? List berries and nuts which were found growing wild in the New England woods.

2) What seeds could be planted for food? How was farming done? What equipment was available? What fertilizers were used?

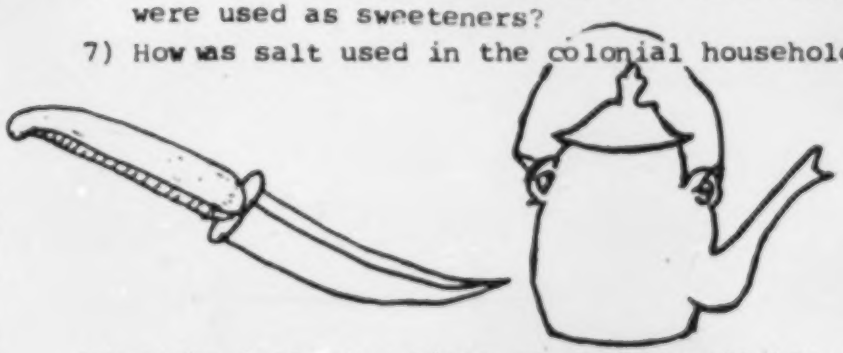
3) What wild animals were hunted for food? What domestic animals did the colonists have? Which were used for food?

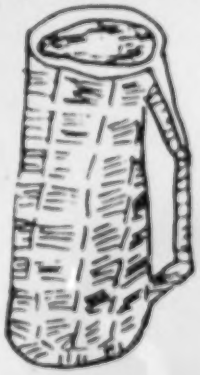
4) What fish could be found in the ocean and rivers?

5) How were foods preserved in summer? In winter? What could be done to prevent meat from spoiling?

6) Where could sugar be obtained? What other things were used as sweeteners?

7) How was salt used in the colonial households?





From the following lists of foods available in early colonial times, try to make up some menus....for a summer day, a winter day, or for the voyage to America.....

Bacon, beef, butter, cheese, eggs, fowl, lamb, milk, port, veal, wild game, cod, herring, mackerel, salmon, sturgeon, barley, beans, bran, cabbage, carrots, corn, rye meal, oats, parsnips, peas, pumpkins, squash, turnips, wheat, apples, berries, honey, raisin, sugar, vinegar, biscuit, salt, salad oil, porridge, spices.

Notice that many common foods such as potatoes are missing. Also, many of your favorite vegetables and other favorite foods are not listed.....simply because they were not available.

Books to Read

Dow, George, Everyday Life in Mass. Bay Colony
June Platt's New England Cookbook

Life in an Old New England Country Village, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, 1969

Places to visit

Plimoth Plantation and Sturbridge Village where you can see cooking done in brick ovens, on the hearth or in a pot hung in the fireplace.

"Before 1776" Study Guide by T. Gruenbaum (1975)

Crafts and Art

Before stores or shops were built in America, goods had to be brought over by the colonists on the boat when they came or else ordered from England (and taking months to arrive.) The colonists found that by taking materials at hand and by using their Yankee ingenuity, they could make for themselves most of what they needed.

Consider this list of natural products and waste products all available to the colonists:

wood, stone, berries, fats, ashes, animal skins, sheep's wool, straw, clay, fruits, and plants.....

How did the colonists recycle or use the Above products to make the following things:

1) Candles
2) Houses
3) Soap
4) Vinegar
5) Shoes

Knowing the Puritan attitude toward work and leisure and their insistance that time be spent in a practical way, it is not surprising that there were few artists in colonial times. We do, however, find portraits, maps, and fine silver utensils from colonial days.

1) What was the purpose of having silver dishes and utensils when everything else (clothing, food, housing) was simple, not luxurious?
2) What practical purpose did art serve?
3) What are the differences between earlier portraits and later portraits?

Books to Read

Glubock, Shirley, Home and Child Life in Colonial Days, MacMillan
Langdon, W. C. Everyday Things in American Life
Richardson, E. P. Painting in America from 1502 to the present, Crowell, New York, 1965
Prown, Jules David, American Painting from its Beginnins to the Armory Show. The World Publishing, no date.
Sherman, Frederic F., Early American Painting. Century Co. NY. 1932

Places to Visit

See Museum of Fine Arts exhibits of paintings by Smibert, Copley, colonial silver by Revere, and old maps.
Look at art books to see the differences in styles of portrait painting and to see early maps.

Religion

The Massachusetts Bay Colony was the center of power of American Puritanism. Winthrop and members of the Mass. Bay Colony had come to the new world for a purpose.....to practice Puritanism. Winthrop and his followers wanted to found a "city upon a hill", an example for all to follow.

The Puritans believed in the "covenant of grace"....that membership in the church was reserved for persons who could prove beyond a doubt that they had been singled out by God for salvation. (This involved describing their previous lives, the moment of conversion, and telling how their lives had been affected.) Winthrop and his followers also believed that they had a special "commission" from God. Since God had kept the group safely during the voyage, they, in return, must enhance God's glory and do God's will. Puritans also believed that they could find the answers to all questions, both religious and civil, in the Bible.

1) A church member was called a "free" man. What could "free" men do that others could not do? Were women also "free"?
2) How did religion affect education in the Bay Colony?
3) In what way was religion a form of entertainment?
4) Why did the ministers seem to have such great power?

An early visitor to Boston, quoted in Bennett's "History of New England" (Mass. Historical Society) had this to say about religion and the Sabbath:

"Their observation of the Sabbath....is the strictest kept. On that day, no man, woman, or child is permitted to go out of town on any pretence whatsoever; nor can any that are out of town come in...The town being situated on a peninsula, there is but one way out of it by land; which is over a narrow neck of land... and the gates are shut by way of prevention. There is a ferry indeed, at the north end of town; but care is taken by way of prevention there also....And as they will by no means admit of trading on Sundays, so they are equally tenacious about preserving good order in the town on the Lord's Day."

1) What does this quote show about the place of religion in life?
2) Why was the Bible such an important part of everyday life? Why was the influence of religion so strong?
3) What happened to dissenters or people who did not agree with the majority of the Puritans?
4) How did religion affect the education of young children?
5) What was the subject matter of the first book printed in the Mass. Bay Colony?

Books to Read

Wright, Louis B., The Cultural Life of the American Colonies Harper, New York, 1957

Morgan, Edmund, The Puritan Dilemma

Morison, S. E. The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England 1956

Boorstein, Daniel J. The Americans, the Colonial Experience Random House, New York, 1958

A place to visit

The Old North Church in Boston.....

"Before 1776" Study Guide by T. Gruenbaum (1975)

Education

In the Massachusetts Bay Colony the following legislation was passed:

Mass. Act of 1642: This law put the responsibility for elementary education on the head of each family. (i.e. the father)

Mass. Act of 1647: This law stated that every town with 50 families had to appoint a school master. Those towns with 100 or more families had to have a Grammar School or face a fine.

"Education" meant learning how to read, but not necessarily learning how to write.

Considering how important the Bible, Church, and religion were to the colonists, try to answer the following questions:

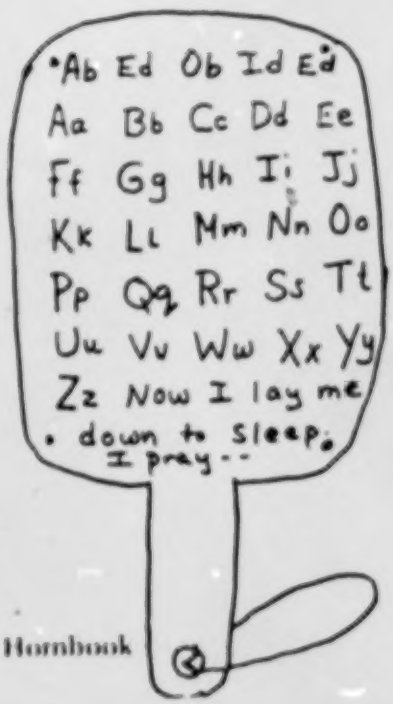
1) What books were used in the schools? Describe a hornbook. How was it used?

2) What subjects were taught in the grammar schools? Did all children attend school? What about girls? What about children with special needs or problems?

3) What kind of books were most frequently read in the 17th century? Name the "best-seller" of the time.

4) What subjects were taught in the colleges? What college was founded first in the Bay Colony? How was it founded?

5) Name some ways in which religion affected education. What effect does religion have on education today?



Hornbook

Books to Read

Morison, S. E. The Intellectual Life of the Colonies of New England, N.Y. U. Press, 1956.

Boorstin, Daniel J. The Americans, the colonial experience, Random House, New York, 1958

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Government

The Mayflower Compact was composed when the Pilgrims discovered that they had landed outside the area specified in their charter. They felt that it was necessary to form a new agreement among themselves to establish a legal government.

> "In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc. Having undertaken, for the glory of God and for the advancement of the Christian faith and honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plan the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the presence of God, and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid, and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, etc., constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness thereof we have underscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11 of November, in the year of the reign of our sovereign Lord King James of England, France and Ireland the eighteenth and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno. Dom. 1620

Try to answer the following questions after reading the Compact.

1) What can you tell about the Pilgrim's reasons for coming to America?
2) Who is the highest human authority for the colonists?
3) What kind of government did they wish to establish in the new land?
4) What provisions for public office are set forth?
5) What values are expressed in the document?

In 1630 the Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony established itself as a commerical enterprise through a simple government. Freemen or stockholders were to meet four times a year as an assembly to admit additional freemen and to make laws that were not contrary to English laws. Once a year in the spring meeting of the General Court, the freemen elected a governor, deputy governor, and 18 assistants to take care of the general business of lands and premises and the government of the people.

1) What form of government still in use today in some New England towns is derived from the Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony?
2) Who was allowed to vote in the town meetings of colonial times and who can vote today?

Books to Read

Smith, Robert, The Massachusetts Bay Colony, Crowell Collier Press, 1969
Rutman, Darret B., Winthrop's Boston, U. of Carolina Press, 1965
Morgan, E. S. The Puritan Dilemma

A Place to Visit

Try to spend an evening watching a New England town meeting in progress.